

Customer No.: 31561
Application No: 10/604,129
Docket No.: 10963-US-PA

REMARKS

Present Status of the Application

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding non-final Office Action mailed on December 1, 2004. The Office Action rejected claim 1 and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Ejima et al. (US Patent No. 5,873,468) in view of Matsuda et al. (US Patent No. 6,096,808) and claims 2-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Ejima and Matsuda and further in view of Iwamoto (US. Patent No. 5,950,836).

Claims 1-11 remain pending of which claims 1 and 9 have been amended and claim 2 has been cancelled to more explicitly and more clearly describe the claimed invention. It is believed that no new matter is added by way of these amendments made to the claims or specification or otherwise to the application.

The Applicant has most respectfully considered the remarks set forth in this Office Action. Regarding the anticipation rejection, it is however strongly believed that the cited references are deficient to adequately teach the claimed features as recited in the amended claims. The reasons that motivate the above position of the Applicant are discussed in detail hereafter, upon which reconsideration of the claims is most earnestly solicited.

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Discussion of the Specification Amendments

The entire specification has been amended to correct various editorial errors. More specifically, the specification has been amended to delete the term "liquid crystal". Such an amendment is prompted by the Examiner's issuance of the citations since the present invention is directed to a carrier for a plate-like structure, such as a panel, and is not specific for any products.

Discussion of Office Action Rejections

The Office Action rejected claim 1 and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Ejima et al. (US Patent No. 5,873,468, Ejima hereinafter).

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the reference or references, taken alone or combined, must teach or suggest each and every element recited in the claims. Further, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references in a manner resulting in the claimed invention. See M.P.E.P. § 2143, 8th, February 2003. Applicants respectfully submit that Ejima in view of Matsuda are legally deficient for the purpose of rendering claim 1 unpatentable.

The present invention teaches in claim 1, among other things, "... a plurality of attaching elements, wherein the two ends of each attaching element are inserted into any of the

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corresponding cannellures on two opposing interior lateral surfaces to partition the interior of the box into compartments of various sizes. ...

Contrary to the Office's allegation, Ejima does not teach or suggest the above-mentioned features of the invention. Instead, Ejima teaches a wafer carrier 21 and semiconductor wafers are housed inside the wafer carrier 21 at regular intervals by means of supporting ribs 21A (col. 5, ln. 19-21, Fig. 4). In other words, Ejima teaches a single compartment for housing wafers of one single size. The Office further asserts that Ejima teaches a plurality of attaching elements similar to those of the invention. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The element of Ejima that is being construed as equivalent to the attaching elements of the invention is actually a thin-plate presser member 22 which is mounted on the wafer carrier 21 so as press the semiconductor wafers 12 from the upper side (col. 7, ln 3-9, Fig. 4). In other words, the thin-plate presser member 22, with substantially a same size and dimension of the wafer carrier 21, is placed above the wafers after the wafers are already being housed inside the wafer carrier 21. In essence, one presser member 22 corresponds to one carrier, rather than a plurality of attaching elements for one carrier as in this invention. Moreover, there is only one way for the thin-plate presser member 22 of Ejima to be mounted on the wafer carrier, which is pressing from the top. The attaching elements of this invention, however, can be inserted into any corresponding cannellures on two opposing interior lateral surfaces to partition the interior of the box into compartments of desirable dimensions. Therefore, the thin-plate presser member 22 can not be served as partitions to form

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compartments inside the box for housing panels, let alone be served as partitions to form compartments of various sizes inside the box for housing panels of various sizes.

Although the Office further alleges that Matsuda teach a panel carrier comprising a box where the compartments are of various sizes in Fig 4 (ref 18), Applicant again respectfully disagrees. Matsuda, in fact, teaches in Figure 4, a 3-dimensional, hollow frame cassette with a pair of substrate support members 18a, b, c spaced away from each other and carried at the frame with at least one substrate 20 being support therebetween in the frame (see abstract). The substrate support members of Matsuda are fixed carried at the frame at one of longitudinal ends thereof, and at the other of the longitudinal ends thereof so that the members are able to expand or contract in length-wise direction thereof. Although the hollow frame cassette of Matsuda is able to thermally expand without any obstruction, the above hollow frame cassette still can only house substrates of one size at a time. It is obvious from the teaching of Matsuda that, in order to house substrates of other sizes, the support members of the hollow frame case need to be reassembled. Further, Matsuda demands many of the support members 24 that are fixed to the hollow frame by using screws 16e and 27 and threaded holes (see col. 7, ln 32-col. 8, ln 50) to house the substrates of one size, whereas the present invention only requires inserting the plurality of attaching elements into any of the corresponding cannellures on two opposing interior lateral surfaces to partition the interior of the box into compartments of various sizes. Therefore, the application of Matsuda's cassette not only is labor intensive, it is neither time nor economically efficient.

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In summary, the present invention teaches a carrier that comprises a box, wherein the interior of the box further comprises a bottom surface and lateral surfaces having cannellures thereon and the attaching elements can be plugged into any of the corresponding cannellures on two opposing interior lateral surfaces inside the box for partitioning the interior into variable size compartments. There is no explicit teaching nor implicit suggestion in either Matsuda or Ejima of the above-mentioned features.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully asserts that there is no motivation to combine Ejima with Matsuda. Even if there were motivation to combine Ejima with Matsuda, the combination still fails to teach or suggest the present invention or to render claim 1 obvious. Since claims 8-11 are dependent claims, which further define the invention recited in claim 1, Applicants respectfully assert that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected claim 2-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Ejima et al. and Matsuda and in further view of Iwamoto et al. (USP 5,950,836, Iwamoto hereinafter).

With regard to the rejections of claims by Ejima and Matsuda and further in view of Iwamoto, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims patently define over the prior art for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1 discussed above.

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Further, as shown in Figure 1, the dimension of the partitions of the container of Iwamoto is fixed. On the other hand, the all lateral sides and the bottom surface of the box of the present invention comprise saw-tooth cannelures so that the two ends of each attaching element are inserted into any of the corresponding cannelures on two opposing interior lateral surfaces to partition the interior of the box into compartments of various sizes. Therefore even Ejima is combined with Matsuda and Iwamoto, the combination still fails to render the present invention unpatentable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the presently pending claims 1-11 are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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